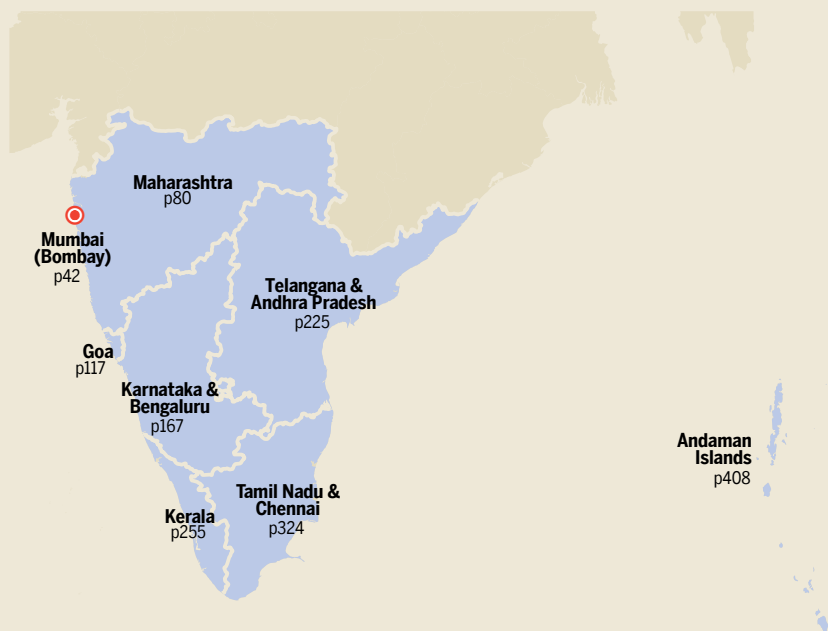




# South India & Kerala



Isabella Noble

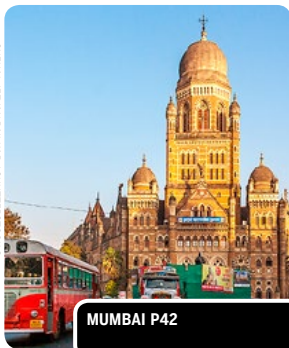
Kevin Raub, Paul Harding, Sarina Singh, Iain Stewart

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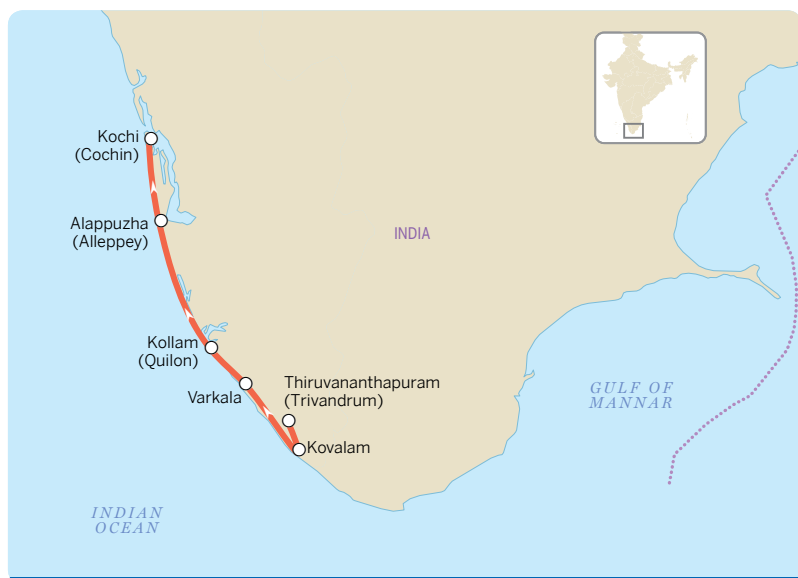
## SPECIAL FEATURES

### **Ancient & Historic Sites .....**

### **Mysuru Palace in 3D .....**

### **Kerala colour feature .....**

# Itineraries



2  
WEEKS

## Classic Kerala

With its coconut-palm-fringed beaches and lazy backwater boat rides, Kerala can justly claim to be India's most laid-back state. But there's plenty of colour and fun to spice up your tropical idyll – elephant festivals and snake-boat races, Kathakali dance-dramas, quaint colonial-era quarters and a famously flavoursome cuisine.

Spend a day visiting the zoological gardens and museums in the capital, **Thiruvananthapuram**, aka Trivandrum, before making the half-hour hop to the beach resort of **Kovalam**. Then shift down another gear at **Varkala**, a holy town with a dizzying clifftop guesthouse-and-restaurant enclave, where you can chill out with some yoga or surfing. Continue north to **Kollam** (Quilon) and take the tourist cruise along the canals to Alappuzha (Alleppey) with an overnight stop at the Matha Amrithanandamayi Mission, the pink ashram of 'The Hugging Mother'. Reaching **Alleppey**, you're at houseboat central. Scout for a houseboat or canoe operator and discover what the sublime backwaters are all about. Continuing north by train to **Kochi** (Cochin), take the short ferry ride to the old colonial outpost of Fort Cochin. Aromatic seafood barbecues, wonderfully warm homestays, colonial-era mansions, Kathakali shows and the intriguing Jewish quarter at Mattancherry make this a fascinating place to while away a few days.

4  
WEEKS

## Goa, Caves & Cities

City lights, historic sites, beachy bliss, jungle adventure and a touch of colonial-era quaintness – this trip will give you the flavour of all that’s best about the south.

Begin in cosmopolitan **Mumbai** (Bombay), Bollywood’s beating heart and home to some of the nation’s best spots to shop, eat and drink. Take a sunset stroll along Marine Dr, a curvaceous oceanside promenade dubbed the ‘Queen’s Necklace’ because of its sparkling night lights, finishing with *bhelpuri* (fried rounds of dough with rice, lentils and chutney) and a neck massage on Chowpatty beach. Catch a ferry to Elephanta Island from Mumbai’s historic Gateway of India to explore its stunning rock-cut temples and the triple-faced sculpture of Lord Shiva.

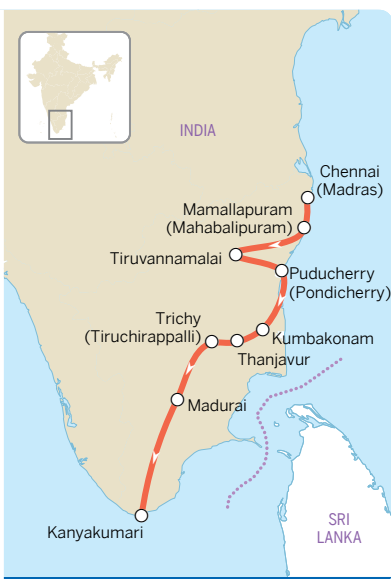
Next, make your way to the dazzling vineyards of Indian wine country around **Nasik**, sipping on award-winning juice at Grover Zampa or Sula Vineyards, an outside-the-box Indian experience. Continue northeast to explore the ancient cave art at **Ajanta** and **Ellora**, situated within 150km of each other near Aurangabad. The incredible frescoed Buddhist caves of Ajanta are clustered along a horseshoe-shaped gorge, while the rock-cut caves of Ellora – containing a mix of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist shrines – are set on a 2km escarpment. Next stop: the tropical beach haven of **Goa** for some soul-reviving sandcastle therapy. Wander through a lush spice plantation, visit Portuguese-era cathedrals at Old Goa, shop at Anjuna’s colourful flea market and take your pick from dozens of fabulous beach spots, before travelling east to the traveller hot spot of **Hampi** in neighbouring Karnataka. Ramble around Hampi’s enigmatic boulder-strewn landscape and imagine what life here was like when it was a centre of the mighty Vijayanagar empire. Make the long trip down to **Mysuru** (Mysore) to explore the Maharaja’s Palace, one of India’s grandest royal buildings, and shop for silk and sandalwood in its colourful markets. From Mysuru it’s an exciting bus ride across the Western Ghats into Kerala and the **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary**, a pristine forest and jungle reserve and one of the best places in the south to spot wild elephants. Finally, take the hair-raising road down to the coast and make your way to **Kochi**, Kerala’s intriguing colonial-era city, where a blend of Portuguese, Dutch and English history combines with wonderful homestays and a buzzing traveller scene.

3  
WEEKS

## Cities, Hill Stations & Sanctuaries

An offbeat trip through the contrasting cities, wildlife parks and hill stations of the Deccan and Western Ghats will give you a true taste of the fascinating variety of inland South India.

Start with a venture to the little-visited but fantastic **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve**, offering some of India's best prospects for sighting wild tigers, then journey south to the wonderful old princely capital **Hyderabad**. Continue south to India's 21st-century IT capital, **Bengaluru** (Bangalore), and glimpse a royal past at its whimsical Bangalore Palace. Next stop: the royal city of **Mysuru** (Mysore). Gawp at the Maharaja's Palace, an ubergrand complex topped with rhubarb-red and chalky-white domes. Head south to **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve**, where you can spot wild elephants and take a safari through pristine jungle, and on to the cool hill town of **Ooty** (Udhagamandalam). Take the toy train down to Coimbatore, then cross into Kerala and the emerald-green, tea-covered hills of **Munnar**. Finish with some jungle trekking and more chances of a tiger sighting at pretty **Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary**.

12  
DAYS

## Sacred Tamil Nadu

A journey through Tamil Nadu is a trip into South India's spiritual soul.

Delve into the rich history of **Chennai** (Madras) with a wander around the Government Museum before visiting the ancient Kapaleeshwarar and Parthasarathy Temples. Travel south to beachside **Mamallapuram** (Mahabalipuram) and its superb rock-cut shrines carved under the ancient Pallava dynasty. Move inland to **Tiruvannamalai**, where the Arunachaleshwar Temple is one of India's largest sacred complexes. Trade in temples for flamboyant churches and cathedrals in the quaint old French seaside colony of **Puducherry** (Pondicherry) before heading back inland to the stunning Unesco World Heritage-listed medieval temples around **Kumbakonam** and **Thanjavur**. Continue to **Trichy** (Tiruchirappalli), home to the spectacular Rock Fort Temple and the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple. Then head south to **Madurai** and the incredible Meenakshi Amman Temple, widely reckoned the pinnacle of South Indian temple architecture. Wind down at **Kanyakumari**, the southern tip of India, with its temple to the virgin sea goddess Kumari.

# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Body surfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



**Iain Stewart**

[Karnataka & Bengaluru](#), [Telangana & Andhra Pradesh](#) Iain trained as a journalist and worked as a reporter and restaurant critic in London in the 1990s. He started writing guidebooks in 1997 and has penned more than 60 titles for destinations as diverse as Ibiza and Cambodia. For Lonely Planet, Iain's worked on books including *Mexico*, *Indonesia*, *Croatia*, *Vietnam*, *India*, *Sri Lanka* and *Central America*. Other passions include tennis, scuba and freediving. He'll consider working an-

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## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



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**Tamil Nadu & Chennai** English-Australian on paper but Spanish at heart, Isabella has been wandering the globe since her first round-the-world trip as a one-year-old. Having grown up in a whitewashed Andalucian village, she is a Spain specialist travel journalist, but also writes extensively about India, Thailand, the UK and beyond for Lonely Planet, the *Daily Telegraph* and others. Isabella has co-written Lonely Planet guides to Spain and Andalucía, and is a *Daily Telegraph Spain*

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OVER MORE  
PAGE WRITERS

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